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THE

TOY-SHOP.

By Mr ROBERT DODSLEY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

		Covent-Garden.
	Master of the Shop,	Mr Chapman.
1	*Gentlemen,*	Mr Bridgewater.
2		Mr Wignell.
3		Mr Hallam.
4		Mr Hale.
	Beau,	Mr Neale.
1	*Old Man,*	Mr James.
2		Mr Hippesley.

WOMEN.

1	*Lady,*	Mrs Bullock.
2		Mrs Norsa.
3		Mrs Mullart.
4		Miss Binks.

INTRODUCTION.

Enter a Gentleman *and* two Ladies.

GENTLEMAN.

AND you never have been at this extraordinary toy-shop, you say, Madam?

1 *La.* No, Sir: I have heard of the man, indeed; but most people say he's a very impertinent silly fellow.

Gent. That's because he sometimes tells them of their faults.

1 *La.* And that's sufficient. I should think any man imper-

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impertinent that ſhould pretend to tell me of my faults, if they did not concern him.

Gent. Yes, Madam; but people that know him take no exceptions. And really, tho' ſome may think him impertinent, in my opinion he's very entertaining.

2 *La.* Pray, who is the man your are talking of? I never heard of him.

Gent. He's one who has lately ſet up a toy-ſhop, Madam; and is, perhaps, the moſt extraordinary perſon in his way that ever was heard of. He is a general ſatiriſt, yet not rude or ill-natur'd. He has got a cuſtom of moralizing upon every trifle he ſells; and will ſtrike a leſſon or inſtruction out of a ſnuff-box, a thimble, or a cockle-ſhell.

1 *La.* Isn't he craz'd?

Gent. Madam, he may be call'd a humoriſt; but does not want ſenſe, I do aſſure you.

2 *La.* Methinks I ſhould be glad to ſee him.

Gent. I dare ſay you will be very much diverted. And if you'll give me leave, I'll wait on you. I'm particularly acquainted with him.

2 *La.* What ſay you, Madam, ſhall we go?

1 *La.* I can't help thinking he's a coxcomb; however, to ſatisfy my curioſity, I don't care if I do.

Gent. I believe the coach is at the door.

2 *La.* I hope he won't affront us.

Gent. He won't deſignedly, I'm ſure, Madam.

[*Exeunt.*]

The SCENE *opens and diſcovers the toy-ſhop; the Maſter ſtanding behind the counter, looking over his books.*

MASTER.

METHINKS I have had a tolerable good day of it to-day. A gold-watch, five-and-thirty guineas——Let me ſee——What did that watch ſtand me in?——* Where is it? O here——Lent to Lady Baſſet eighteen guineas upon her gold watch. Ay, ſhe died

* Turning to another book backwards and forwards.

and never redeem'd it—A ſet of old china, five pounds.—Bought of an old-cloaths man for five ſhillings. Right. A curious ſhell for a ſnuff-box, two guineas.—Bought of a poor fiſherboy for a halfpenny. Now, if I had offered that ſhell for ſixpence, nobody would have bought it. Well, thanks to the whimſical extravagance and folly of mankind. I believe, from theſe childiſh toys, and gilded baubles, I ſhall pick up a comfortable maintenance. For really, as it is a trifling age, ſo nothing but trifles are valued in it. Men read none but trifling authors; purſue none but trifling amuſements; and contend for none but trifling opinions. A trifling fellow is preferr'd; a trifling woman admir'd. Nay, as if there were not real trifles enow, they make trifles of the moſt ſerious and valuable things. Their time, their health, their money, their reputation, are trifled away. Honeſty is become a trifle, conſcience a trifle, honour a mere trifle, and religion the greateſt trifle of all.

Enter the Gentleman *and* two Ladies.

Maſt. Sir, your humble ſervant; I'm very glad to ſee you.

Gent. Sir, I am your's. I have brought you ſome cuſtomers here.

Maſt. You are very good, Sir. What do you pleaſe to want, Ladies?

1 *La.* Pleaſe to want! People ſeldom pleaſe to want any thing, Sir.

Maſt. O dear, Madam, yes; I always imagine when people come into a toy-ſhop, it muſt be for ſomething they pleaſe to want.

2 *La.* Here is a mighty pretty looking-glaſs: pray, Sir, what's the price of it?

Maſt. This looking-glaſs, Madam, is the fineſt in all England. In this glaſs a coquette may ſee her vanity, and a prude her hypocriſy. Some ladies may ſee more beauty than modeſty, more airs than graces, and more wit than good-nature.

1 *La.* [*Aſide*] He begins already.

Maſt. If a beau was to buy this glaſs, and look earneſtly into it, he might ſee his folly almoſt as ſoon as his finery. 'Tis true, ſome people may not ſee their generoſity in it, nor others their charity; yet it is a very clear glaſs.

glaſs. Some fine gentlemen may not ſee their good-manners in it, perhaps, nor ſome perſons their religion; yet it is a very clear glaſs. In ſhort, tho' every one that paſſes for a maid ſhould not happen to ſee a virgin in it, yet it may be a very clear glaſs, you know, for all that.

2 *La.* Yes, Sir; but I did not aſk you the virtues of it: I aſk'd you the price.

Maſt. It was neceſſary to tell you the virtues, Madam, in order to prevent you ſcrupling the price, which is five guineas; and for ſo extraordinary a glaſs, in my opinion, it is but a trifle.

2 *La.* Lord, I'm afraid to look into it, methinks, leſt it ſhou'd ſhow me more of my faults than I care to ſee.

1 *La.* Pray, Sir, what can be the uſe of this very diminutive piece of goods here?

Maſt. This box, Madam! In the firſt place, it is a very great curioſity, being the leaſt box that ever was ſeen in England.

1 *La.* Then a very little curioſity had been more proper.

Maſt. Right, Madam. Yet, would you think it? in this ſame little box, a courtier may depoſit his ſincerity, a lawyer may ſcrew up his honeſty, and a poet may—— hoard his money.

Gent. Ha! ha! I will make a preſent of it to Mr Stanza for the very ſame purpoſe.

2 *La.* Here's a fine perſpective. Now, I think, Madam, in the country, theſe are a very pretty amuſement.

Maſt. Oh, Madam, the moſt uſeful and diverting things imaginable, either in town and country. The nature of this glaſs, Madam, (pardon my impertinence in pretending to tell you, what, to be ſure, you are as well acquainted with as myſelf), is this: If you look thro' it at this end, every object is magnified, brought near, and diſcern'd with the greateſt plainneſs; but turn it the other way, do you ſee, and they are all leſſen'd, caſt at a great diſtance, and rendered almoſt imperceptible. Thro' this end it is that we look at our own faults; but when other people are to be examined, we are ready enough to turn the other. Thro' this end are view'd all the benefits and advdntages we at any time receive from others; but

but if ever we happen to confer any, they are ſure to be ſhown in their greateſt magnitude thro' the other. Thro' this end we enviouſly darken and contract the virtue, the merit, the beauty, of all the world around us; but fondly compliment our own with the moſt agreeable and advantageous light thro' the other.

2 *La.* Why, Sir, methinks you are a new kind of ſatirical parſon; your ſhop is your ſcripture, and every piece of goods a different text, from which you expoſe the vices and follies of mankind in a very fine allegorical ſermon.

Maſt. Right, Madam, right; I thank you for the ſmile. I may be call'd a parſon indeed, and am a very good one in my way. I take delight in my calling, and am never better pleas'd than to ſee a full congregation. Yet it happens to me, as it does to moſt of my brethren, people ſometimes vouchſafe to take home the text perhaps, but mind the ſermon no more than if they had not heard one.

1 *La.* Why, Sir, when a ſhort text has more in it than a long ſermon, 'tis no wonder if they do.

Enter a third Lady.

3 *La.* Pray, Sir, let me look at ſome of your little dogs.

2 *La.* [*Aſide.*] Little dogs! My ſtars! how cheaply ſome people are entertained! Well, 'tis a ſign human converſation is grown low and inſipid, whilſt that of dogs and monkeys is preferr'd to it.

Maſt. Here are very beautiful dogs, Madam. Theſe dogs, when they were alive, were ſome of them the greateſt dogs of their age. I don't mean the largeſt, but dogs of the greateſt quality and merit.

1 *La.* I love a dog of merit dearly: Has not he a dog of honour too, I wonder? [*Aſide.*]

Maſt. Here's a dog, now, that never eat but upon plate or china, nor ſet his foot but upon a carpet or a cuſhion. Here's one, too; this dog belonged to a lady of as great beauty and fortune as any in England; he was her moſt intimate friend and particular favourite; and upon that account has received more compliments, more reſpect, and more addreſſes, than a firſt miniſter of ſtate. Here's another, which was, doubtleſs, a dog of

ſingular

ſingular worth and great importance, ſince at his death one of the greateſt families in the kingdom were all in tears, received no viſits for the ſpace of a week, but ſhut themſelves up, and mourn'd their loſs with inconſolable ſorrow. This dog, while he liv'd, either for contempt of his perſon, neglect of his buſineſs, or ſaucy and impertinent behaviours in their attendance on him, had the honour of turning away upwards of thirty ſervants. He died at laſt of a cold caught by following one of the maids into a damp room; for which ſhe loſt her place, her wages, and her character.

3 *La.* O the careleſs, wicked wretch! I wou'd have had her try'd for murder at leaſt. That, that is juſt my caſe! The ſad relation revives my grief ſo ſtrongly, I cannot contain. Lucy, bring in the box. † See! ſee! the charming creature here lies dead! Its precious life is gone! Oh, my dear Chloe, no more wilt thou lie hugg'd in my warm boſom! no more will that ſweet tongue lick o'er my face, nor that dear mouth eat dainty bits from mine. Oh, death! what haſt thou robb'd me of?

Gent. [*Aſide.*] A proper object to diſplay your folly!

Maſt. Pray, Madam, moderate your grief; you ought to thank Heaven 'tis not your huſband.

3 *La.* Oh, what is huſband, father, mother, ſon, to my dear precious Chloe!—No, no, I cannot live without the ſight of his dear image; and if you cannot make me the exact effigies of this poor dead creature, I muſt never hope to ſee one happy day in life.

Maſt. Well, Madam, be comforted, I will do it to your ſatisfaction. [*Taking the box.*

3 *La.* Let me have one look more. Poor creature! O cruel fate, that dogs are born to die!

[*Exit weeping.*

Gent. What a ſcene is here! Are not the real and unavoidable evils of life ſufficient, that people thus create to themſelves imaginary woes?

Maſt. Theſe, Sir, are the griefs of thoſe who have no other

† Here her maid enters, and delivers a box, from which the lady pulls out a dead dog, kiſſing it, and weeping. Lucy too pretends great ſorrow; but turning aſide, burſts out a-laughing, and cries, "She little thinks I poiſon'd it."

other. Did they once truly feel the real miſeries of life, ten thouſand dogs might die without a tear.

Enter a ſecond Gentleman.

2 *Gent.* I want an ivory pocket-book.

Maſt. Do you pleaſe to have it with directions or without?

2 *Gent.* Directions! What, how to uſe it?

Maſt. Yes, Sir.

2 *Gent.* I ſhould think every man's own buſineſs his beſt direction.

Maſt. It may be ſo. Yet there are ſome general rules which it equally behoves every man to be acquainted with. As for inſtance: Always to make a memorandum of the benefits you receive from others; always to ſet down the faults or failings which from time to time you diſcover in yourſelf. And if you remark any thing that is ridiculous or faulty in others, let it not be with an ill-natur'd deſign to hurt or expoſe them at any time, but with a *nota bene*, that it is only for a caution to yourſelf not to be guilty of the like. With a great many other rules of ſuch a nature, as makes one of my pocket-books both an uſeful monitor, and a very entertaining companion.

2 *Gent.* And pray, what's the price of one of them?

Maſt. The price is a guinea, Sir.

2 *Gent.* That's very dear. But as it is a curioſity—

[*Pays for it, and exit.*]

Enter a Beau.

Beau. Pray, Sir, let me ſee ſome of your handſomeſt ſnuff-boxes.

Maſt. Here is a plain gold one, Sir, a very neat box; here's a gold enamell'd; here's a ſilver one neatly carv'd and gilt; here's a curious ſhell, Sir, ſet in gold.

Beau. Damn your ſhells; there's not one of them fit for a gentleman to put his fingers into. I want one with ſome pretty device on the inſide of the lid; ſomething that may ſerve to joke upon, or help one to an occaſion to be witty, that is, ſmutty, now and then.

Maſt. And are witty and ſmutty then ſynonimous terms?

Beau. O dear, Sir, yes; a little decent ſmut is the very life of all converſation: 'tis the wit of drawing-rooms,

rooms, assemblies, and tea-tables; 'tis the smart raillery of fine gentlemen, and the innocent freedom of fine ladies; 'tis a *double entendre*, at which the coquette laughs, the prude looks grave, the modest blush, but all are pleased with.

Mast. That it is the wit and entertainment of all conversation, I believe, Sir, may possibly be a mistake. 'Tis true, those who are so rude as to use it in all conversations, may possibly be so depraved themselves, as to fancy every body else as agreeably entertained in hearing it as they are in uttering it: But I dare say, any man or woman, of real virtue and modesty, has as little taste for such ribaldry, as those coxcombs have for what is good sense or true politeness.

Beau. Good sense, Sir! Damme, Sir, what do you mean? I wou'd have you think I know good sense as well as any man. Good sense is a true—a right——a —a—a——Damn it, I scorn to be so pedantic as to make definitions: but I can invent a cramp oath, Sir; drink a smutty health, Sir; ridicule priests, laugh at all religion, and make such a grave prig as you look just like a fool, Sir. Now, damme, I take that to be good sense.

Mast. And I, unmov'd, can hear such senseless ridicule, and look upon its author with an eye of pity and contempt. And I take this to be good sense.

Beau. Psha, psha, damn'd hypocrisy and affectation, nothing else, nothing else. [*Exit.*

Mast. There is nothing so much my aversion as a coxcomb. They are a ridicule upon human nature, and make one almost asham'd to be of the same species: and for that reason I can't forbear affronting them whenever they fall in my way. I hope the ladies will excuse such behaviour in their presence.

2 *La.* Indeed, Sir, I wish we had always somebody to treat them with such behaviour in our presence. 'Twould be much more agreeable than their impertinence.

Enter a young Gentleman.

3 *Gent.* I want a plain gold ring, Sir, exactly this size.

Mast. Then it is not for yourself, Sir?

3 *Gent.*

3 *Gent.* No.

Maſt. A wedding-ring, I preſume.

3*d Gent.* No, Sir; I thank you kindly; that's a toy I never deſign to play with. 'Tis the moſt dangerous piece of goods in your whole ſhop. People are perpetually doing themſelves a miſchief with it. They hang themſelves faſt together firſt; and afterwards are ready to hang themſelves ſeparately, to get looſe again.

1 *La.* This is but a faſhionable cant. I'll be hang'd if this pretended railer at matrimony is not juſt upon the point of making ſome poor woman miſerable. [*Aſide.*

3 *Gent.* Well—happy are we whilſt we are children; we can then lay down one toy and take up another, and pleaſe ourſelves with variety: but growing more fooliſh as we grow older, there's no toy will pleaſe us then but a wife; and that indeed, as 'tis a toy for life, ſo it is all toys in one. She is a rattle in a man's ears, which he cannot throw aſide; a drum which is perpetually beating him a point of war; a top which he ought to whip for his exerciſe, for, like that, ſhe is beſt when laſh'd to ſleep; a hobby-horſe for the booby to ride on when the maggot takes him; a—

Maſt. You may go on, Sir, in this ludicrous ſtrain, if you pleaſe, and fancy 'tis wit; but, in my opinion, a good wife is the greateſt bleſſing, and the moſt valuable poſſeſſion, that heaven, in this life, can beſtow: ſhe makes the cares of the world ſit eaſy, and adds a ſweetneſs to its pleaſures; ſhe is a man's beſt companion in proſperity, and his only friend in adverſity; the carefulleſt preſerver of his health, and the kindeſt attendant on his ſickneſs; a faithful adviſer in diſtreſs, a comforter in affliction, and a prudent manager of all his domeſtic affairs.

2 *La.* Charming doctrine! [*Aſide.*

3 *Gent.* Well, Sir, ſince I find you ſo ſtaunch an advocate for matrimony, I confeſs 'tis a wedding-ring I want: the reaſon why I deny'd it, and of what I ſaid in ridicule of marriage, was only to avoid the ridicule which I expected from you upon it.

Maſt. Why, that now is juſt the way of the world in every thing, eſpecially amongſt young people. They are aſhamed to do a good action, becauſe it is not a fa-

ſhionable one; and, in compliance with cuſtom, act contrary to their own conſcience. They diſpleaſe themſelves, to pleaſe the coxcombs of the world; and chooſe rather to be objects of divine wrath, than human ridicule.

3 *Gent.* 'Tis very true, indeed. There is not one man in ten thouſand that dare be virtuous, for fear of being ſingular. 'Tis a weakneſs which I have hitherto been too much guilty of myſelf; but for the future I am reſolv'd upon a more ſteady rule of action.

Maſt. I am very glad of it. Here's your ring, Sir; I think it comes to about a guinea.

3 *Gent.* There's the money.

Maſt. Sir, I wiſh you all the joy that a good wife can give you.

3 *Gent.* I thank you, Sir. [*Exit.*

1 *La.* Well, Sir; but, after all, don't you think marriage a kind of deſperate venture.

Maſt. It is a deſperate venture, Madam, to be ſure: but, provided there be a tolerable ſhare of ſenſe and diſcretion on the man's part, and of mildneſs and condeſcenſion on the woman's, there is no danger of leading as happy and comfortable a life in that ſtate as in any other.

Enter a fourth Lady.

4 *La.* I want a maſk, Sir; have you got any?

Maſt. No, Madam, I have not one indeed. The people of this age are arriv'd to ſuch perfection in the art of maſking themſelves, that they have no occaſion for any foreign diſguiſes at all. You ſhall find infidelity maſk'd in a gown and caſſock; and wantonneſs and immodeſty under a bluſhing countenance. Oppreſſion is veil'd under the name of juſtice; and fraud and cunning under that of wiſdom. The fool is maſk'd under an affected gravity; and the vileſt hypocrite under the greateſt profeſſions of ſincerity. The flatterer paſſes upon you under the air of a friend; and he that now hugs you in his boſom, for a ſhilling would cut your throat. Calumny and detraction impoſe themſelves upon the world for wit; and an eternal laugh would fain be thought good nature. An humble demeanour is aſſumed from a principle of pride; and the wants of the indigent relie-

ved out of oſtentation. In ſhort, worthleſſneſs and villany are oft diſguiſed and dignified in gold and jewels, whilſt honeſty and merit lie hid under rags and miſery. The whole world is in a maſk; and it is impoſſible to ſee the natural face of any one individual.

4 *La.* That's a miſtake, Sir; you yourſelf are an inſtance that no diſguiſe will hide a coxcomb; and ſo your humble ſervant. [*Exit.*

Maſt. Humph!——Have I but juſt now been exclaiming againſt coxcombs, and am I accuſed of being one myſelf? Well——we can none of us ſee the ridiculous parts of our own characters. Could we but once learn to criticiſe ourſelves, and to find out and expoſe to ourſelves our own weak ſides, it would be the ſureſt means to conceal them from the criticiſm of others. But I would fain hope I am not a coxcomb, methinks, whatever I am elſe.

Gent. I ſuppoſe you have ſaid ſomething which her conſcience would not ſuffer her to paſs over without making the ungrateful application to herſelf; and that, as it often happens, inſtead of awaking in her a ſenſe of her fault, has only ſerved to put her in a paſſion.

Maſt. May be ſo, indeed; at leaſt I am willing to think ſo.

Enter an Old Man.

O. M. I want a pair of ſpectacles, Sir.

Maſt. Do you pleaſe to have them plain tortoiſe-ſhell, or ſet in gold or ſilver?

O. M. Pho! Do you think I buy ſpectacles as your fine gentlemen buy books? If I wanted a pair of ſpectacles only to look *at*, I would have 'em fine ones; but as I want them to look *with*, do you ſee, I'll have them good ones.

Maſt. Very well, Sir. Here's a pair I'm ſure will pleaſe you. Through theſe ſpectacles all the follies of youth are ſeen in their true light. Thoſe vices which to the ſtrongeſt youthful eyes appear in characters ſcarce legible, are thro' theſe glaſſes diſcern'd with the greateſt plainneſs. A powder'd wig upon an empty head attracts no more reſpect through theſe optics than a greaſy cap; and the laced coat of a coxcomb ſeems altogether as contemptible as his footman's livery.

O. M.

O. M. That indeed is ſhowing things in their true light.

Maſt. The common virtue of the world appears only a cloak for knavery, and its friendſhips no more than bargains of ſelf-intereſt. In ſhort, he who is now paſſing away his days in a conſtant round of vanity, folly, intemperance, and extravagance, when he comes ſeriouſly to look back upon his paſt actions thro' theſe undiſguiſing optics, will certainly be convinced, that a regular life, ſpent in the ſtudy of truth and virtue, and adorn'd with acts of juſtice, generoſity, charity, and benevolence, would not only have afforded him more delight and ſatisfaction in the preſent moment, but would likewiſe have raiſed to his memory a laſting monument of fame and honour.

O. M. Humph! 'Tis very true; but very odd that ſuch ſerious ware ſhould be the commodity of a toy-ſhop. [*Aſide.*] Well, Sir, and what's the price of theſe extraordinary ſpectacles?

Maſt. Half-a-crown.

O. M. There's your money. [*Exit.*

Enter a fourth young Gentleman.

4 *Gent.* I want a pair of ſcales.

Maſt. You ſhall have them, Sir.

4 *Gent.* Are they exactly true?

Maſt. The very emblem of juſtice, Sir; a hair will turn them. [*Balancing the ſcales.*

4 *Gent.* I would have them true, for they muſt determine ſome very nice ſtatical experiments.

Maſt. I'll engage they ſhall juſtly determine the niceſt experiments in ſtatics. I have try'd them myſelf in ſome uncommon ſubjects, and have prov'd their goodneſs. I have taken a large handful of great mens promiſes, and put into one end; and lo! the breath of a fly in the other has kick'd up the beam. I have ſeen four peacocks feathers, and the four gold clocks in Lord Tawdry's ſtockings, ſuſpend the ſcales in equilibrio. I have found by experience, that the learning of a beau, and the wit of a pedant, are a juſt counterpoiſe to each other; that the pride and vanity of any man are in exact proportion to his ignorance; that a grain of good-nature will preponderate againſt an ounce of wit; a heart full of

virtue, againſt a head-full of learning; and a thimble-full of content, againſt a cheſt-full of gold.

4 *Gent.* This muſt be a very pretty ſcience, I fancy.

Maſt. It would be endleſs to enumerate all the experiments that might be made in theſe ſcales: but there is one which every one ought to be apprized of; and that is, that a moderate fortune, enjoy'd with content, freedom, and independency, will turn the ſcales againſt whatever can be put in the other end.

4 *Gent.* Well, this is a branch of ſtatics which, I muſt own, I had but little thoughts of entering into. However, I begin to be perſuaded, that to know the true ſpecific gravity of this kind of ſubjects is of infinitely more importance than that of any other bodies in the univerſe.

Maſt. It is indeed. And that you may not want encouragement to proceed in ſo uſeful a ſtudy, I will let you have the ſcales for ten ſhillings. If you make a right uſe of them, they will be worth more to you than ten thouſand pounds.

4 *Gent.* I confeſs I am ſtruck with the beauty and uſefulneſs of this kind of moral ſtatics, and believe I ſhall apply myſelf to make experiments with great delight. There's your money, Sir: You ſhall hear ſhortly what diſcoveries I make; in the mean time, I am your humble ſervant. [*Exit.*

Maſt. Sir, I am your's.

Enter a ſecond Old Man.

2 *O. M.* Sir, I underſtand you deal in curioſities. Have you any thing in your ſhop at preſent that's pretty and curious?

Maſt. Yes, Sir, I have a great many things: but the moſt ancient curioſity I have got, is a ſmall braſs plate, on which is engrav'd the ſpeech which Adam made to his wife on their firſt meeting, together with her anſwer. The characters, through age, are grown unintelligible: but for that 'tis the more to be valued. What is remarkable in this ancient piece is, that Eve's ſpeech is about three times as long as her huſband's. I have a ram's horn, one of thoſe which helped to blow down the walls of Jericho. A lock of Samſon's hair, tied up in a ſhred of Joſeph's garment. With ſeveral other Jewiſh antiquities, which

which I purchaſed of that people at a very great price. Then I have the tune which Orpheus play'd to the devil when he charm'd back his wife.

Gent. That was thought to be a ſilly tune, I believe, for nobody has ever car'd to learn it.

Maſt. Cloſe cork'd up in a thumb-phial, I have ſome of the tears which Alexander wept becauſe he could do no more miſchief. I have a ſnuff-box made out of the tub in which Diogenes lived, and took ſnuff at all the world. I have the net in which Vulcan caught his ſpouſe and her gallant; but our modern wives are grown ſo exceeding chaſte, that there has not been an opportunity of caſting it theſe many years.

Gent. Some would be ſo malicous, as, inſtead of chaſte, to think he meant cunning. [*Aſide to the ladies.*

Maſt. I have the pitch-pipe of Gracchus the Roman orator; who being apt, in diſpute, to raiſe his voice too high, by touching a certain ſoft note in this pipe, would regulate and keep it in a moderate key.

2 *La.* Such a pipe as that, if it could be heard, would be very uſeful in coffee-houſes, and other public places of debate and modern diſputation.

Gent. Yes, Madam; and I believe many a poor huſband would be glad of ſuch a regulator of the voice in his own private family too.

Maſt. There you was even with her, Sir.—But the moſt valuable curioſity I have, is a certain little tube, which I call a diſtinguiſher; contriv'd with ſuch art, that when rightly applied to the ear, it obſtructs all falſehood, nonſenſe, and abſurdity, from ſtriking upon the tympanum: nothing but truth and reaſon can make the leaſt impreſſion upon the auditory nerves. I have ſat in a coffee-houſe ſometimes for the ſpace of half an hour, and amongſt what is generally called the beſt company, without hearing a ſingle word. At a diſpute too, when I could perceive, by the eager motions of both parties, that they made the greateſt noiſe, I have enjoyed the moſt profound ſilence. It is a very uſeful thing to have about one, either at church, play-houſe, or Weſtminſter-hall; at all which places a vaſt variety both of uſeful and diverting experiments may be made with it. The only inconvenience attending it is, that no man can make him-

ſelf a complete maſter of it under twenty years cloſe and diligent practice. And that term of time is beſt commenced at ten or twelve years old.

Gent. That, indeed, is an inconvenience that will make it not every body's money. But one would think thoſe parents, who ſee the beauty and the uſefulneſs of knowledge, virtue, and a diſtinguiſhing judgment, ſhould take particular care to engage their children early in the uſe and practice of ſuch a diſtinguiſher, whilſt they have time before them, and no other concerns to interrupt their application.

Maſt. Some few do. But the generality are ſo entirely taken up with the care of little Maſter's complexion, his dreſs, his dancing, and ſuch like effeminacies, that they have not the leaſt regard for any internal accompliſhments whatſoever; and are ſo far from teaching him to ſubdue his paſſions, that they make it their whole buſineſs to gratify them all.

2 *O. M.* Well, Sir; to ſome people, theſe may be thought curious things, perhaps, and a very valuable collection. But, to confeſs the truth, theſe are not the ſort of curious things I wanted. Have you no little box, repreſenting a wounded heart on the inſide the lid? nor pretty ring, with an amorous poſey? Nothing of that ſort, which is pretty and not common, in your ſhop?

Maſt. O yes, Sir! I have a pretty ſnuff-box here; on the inſide of the lid, do you ſee, is a man of threeſcore and ten acting the lover, and hunting, like a boy, after gewgaws and trifles, to pleaſe a girl with.

2 *O. M.* Meaning me, Sir! Do you banter me, Sir?

Maſt. If you take it to yourſelf, Sir, I can't help it.

2 *O. M.* And is a perſon of my years and gravity to be laugh'd at?

Maſt. Why, really, Sir, years and gravity do make ſuch childiſhneſs very ridiculous, I can't help owning. However, I am very ſorry I have none of theſe curious trifles for your diverſion; but I have delicate hobby-horſes and rattles, if you pleaſe.

2 *O. M.* By all the charms of Araminta, I will revenge this affront. [*Exit.*

Gent. Ha! ha! ha! How contemptible is rage in impotence!

potence! But pray, Sir, don't you think this kind of freedom with your cuſtomers detrimental to your trade?

Maſt. No, no, Sir; the odd character I have acquired by this rough kind of ſincerity and plain-dealing, together with the whimſical humour of moralizing upon every trifle I ſell, are the things which, by raiſing people's curioſity, furniſh me with all my cuſtomers: and it is only fools and coxcombs I am ſo free with.

1 *La.* And, in my opinion, you are in the right of it. Folly and impertinence ought always to be the objects of ſatire and ridicule.

Gent. Nay, upon ſecond thoughts, I don't know but this odd turn of mind which you have given yourſelf may not only be entertaining to ſeveral of your cuſtomers, but perhaps very much ſo to yourſelf.

Maſt. Vaſtly ſo, Sir. It very often helps me to ſpeculations infinitely agreeable. I can ſit behind this counter, and fancy my little ſhop, and the tranſactions of it, an agreeable repreſentation of the grand theatre of the world. When I ſee a fool come in here, and throw away fifty or an hundred guineas for a trifle that is not really worth a ſhilling, I am ſurpriſed. But when I look out into the world, and ſee lordſhips and manors barter'd away for gilt coaches and equipage; an eſtate for a title; and an eaſy freedom in retirement for a ſervile attendance in a crowd; when I ſee health with eagerneſs exchanged for diſeaſes, and happineſs for a game at hazard; my wonder ceaſes. Surely the world is a great toy-ſhop, and all its inhabitants run mad for rattles. Nay, even the very wiſeſt of us, however we may flatter ourſelves, have ſome failing or weakneſs, ſome toy or trifle, that we are ridiculouſly fond of. Yet, ſo very partial are we to our own dear ſelves, that we overlook thoſe miſcarriages in our own conduct which we loudly exclaim againſt in that of others, and tho' the ſame fool's turbant fits us all.

You ſay that I, I ſay that you are he;
And each man ſwears, "The cap's not made for me."

Gent. Ha! ha! 'Tis very true indeed. But I imagine now you begin to think it time to ſhut up ſhop. Ladies, do you want any thing elſe?

1 *La.* No, I think not.—If you pleaſe to put up that looking-

looking-glaſs, and the perſpective, I will pay you for them.

Gent. Well, Madam, how do you like this whimſical humourift?

1 *La.* Why, really, in my opinion, the man's as great a curioſity himſelf as any thing he has got in his ſhop.

Gent. He is ſo, indeed.

In this gay, thoughtleſs age, h'as found a way,
In trifling things juſt morals to convey;
'Tis his at once to pleaſe, and to reform,
And give old ſatire a new pow'r to charm.
And, wou'd you guide your lives and actions right,
Think on the maxims you have heard to-night.

EPILOGUE.

WELL, Heav'n be prais'd, this dull, grave ſermon's done,
(For faith our author might have call'd it one.)
I wonder who the devil he thought to pleaſe!
Is this a time o' day for things like theſe?
Good ſenſe and honeſt ſatire now offend;
We're grown too wiſe to learn, too proud to mend.
And ſo divinely wrapt in ſongs and tunes,
The next wiſe age will all be—fiddlers ſons.
And did he think plain truth would favour find?
Ah! 'tis a ſign he little knows mankind.
To pleaſe, he ought to have a ſong or dance,
The tune from *Italy*, the caper *France:*
Theſe, theſe might charm—But hope to do't with ſenſe!
Alas! alas! how vain is the pretence?
But tho' we told him,—Faith t'will ne'er do——
Poh, never fear, he cry'd; tho' grave, 'tis new:
The whim, perhaps, may pleaſe, if not the wit;
And tho' they don't approve, they may permit.
If neither this nor that will intercede,
Submiſſive bend, and thus for pardon plead.
" Ye gen'rous Few, to you our author ſues,
" His firſt eſſay with candour to excuſe,
" 'T has faults he owns; but if they are but ſmall,
" He hopes your kind applauſe will hide them all."

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